



**2021**

# Community Report

Waterloo  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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## Territorial Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is located on the Haldimand Tract, land that was granted to the Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River and is within the territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples. We acknowledge the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today, their achievements and their contributions to our community.

# About Us

## Our Audacious Goal

Our audacious goal is to be a transformational force in the development of Waterloo and its citizens.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is to fulfill the multiple literacy needs of our community.

## Our Values



Learning & growth



Free exchange of ideas



Being engaged & responsive to needs



Right of everyone to access info



John M. Harper Branch

# From Our CEO

As it did for many others, 2021 started out challenging for the Waterloo Public Library as we were once again closed to the public, offering only WPL To Go curbside pick-up service. Then we were open for browsing, holds pickup and computer access. Then we were closed. Then we were open. And so it went. During 2021, there were endless changes to contend with, but I am so proud and grateful to the Waterloo Public Library (WPL) staff who did whatever was necessary for WPL to be our best selves for our community. No matter the other stresses going on, WPL staff provided the connections our community needed - even stepping up to assist Region of Waterloo Public Health in getting residents booked for vaccine appointments.

Our library community was amazing in reaching out to us by sending their thanks and their positive messages. This kindness was very much appreciated. Our Eastside Branch community also responded to our fundraising campaign for the new branch in spectacular fashion! Our campaign began in the summer with an excellent fundraising package put together by our creative Marketing team, which was emailed to 57,000 customers. In a matter of a few months, all of our named spaces were sponsored, and many members of the community were also happy to support us by generously donating various dollar amounts, including \$500 for having their names displayed on the Donor Wall. This generosity allowed us to afford all the extras that would make this new branch a winner.

The Eastside Branch project was worked on by many WPL staff and their input was invaluable in creating a successful branch. Our Eastside Branch project work with the City of Waterloo, the architects and building contractors provided a much needed ray of sunshine in the COVID world we all lived in. We also celebrated our John M. Harper Branch 10 year anniversary with a beautiful art installation by the talented Lucy Bilson, and we were so happy to also be able to give our beloved McCormick Branch a makeover.

Although 2021 had a shaky start as we continued to navigate the pandemic, it ended well with much more hope on the horizon. Thank you to the passionate and dedicated WPL staff, to the City of Waterloo for your support and partnership, and to our Library Board whose belief in WPL supports all our successes.

**Laurie Clarke**  
**CEO, Waterloo Public Library**

# From Our Board Chair

One thing is certain - we are living in a period of enormous change. While we witness large-scale societal awakening on many fronts and wonder what the post-pandemic world holds for us, we know that change is our 'new normal' and that today's public institutions must be flexible and adaptive. The activities of the past year - innovative programming, new partnerships, and working towards the opening of our new Eastside Branch in 2022 - have demonstrated that our dedicated team is up to this challenge of embracing change, in new, exciting, and creative ways! We had so many good reasons to celebrate, as our entire team actively engaged in the positive transformation our community, via the public library system.

More change is on the way, as we will soon celebrate the retirement of our outstanding CEO, Laurie Clarke, after a decade of visionary leadership. Laurie's legacy will be enduring - most notably, we have successfully achieved our dream of having a sustainably-funded four branch public library system in the City of Waterloo. I am excited about the future of the Waterloo Public Library, as the board has successfully hired an exceptional new CEO - Kelly Kipfer - to lead us into the future. Kelly has been a key member of our senior management team for several years and will bring her creativity and commitment to community to this role, along with a vision that puts the library at the heart of a thriving city, for all.

I would like to thank our superb board members for their service to the library and our city. Governing during a pandemic is not easy - your commitment is noted and appreciated. To Laurie and your extraordinary team - we see the efforts you make, every day, to deliver on our commitment to the citizens of this community. Thank you to Mayor Dave Jaworsky and Councillor Diane Freeman for their steadfast commitment to the Waterloo Public Library. And to the entire team at the City of Waterloo - whether you are on council, in the finance department, or an incredible project manager helping us build a new library - you are fantastic partners for us, and we appreciate it.

Finally, we all owe a great deal of thanks to the citizens of Waterloo. We will continue to work hard for them and for their public library.

**Karen Coviello**

**Chair of the Waterloo Public Library Board**

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## 2021 Library Board

Karen Coviello, Chair

Dawn Charlton

Diane Freeman, Councillor

Rachel Harder

Kelly McManus, Vice Chair

Frank Mensink

Jennifer Murphy

Idrisa Pandit

John Strong

# Library as Space & Place



Ellis Little  
Local History Room

# By the Numbers



**54,769**  
active members



**5,700**  
NEW library cards



**184,350**  
WiFi & Computer  
Users



**1,283,643**  
items borrowed



**1,095,002**  
in person & virtual visitors



**28,650**  
visitors to Our Ontario  
(Local History site)

**52%**  
increase

*The Waterloo Public Library will foster inclusion and understanding through the library's place in the public realm.*

Czytać  
READ  
독서

لعب  
PLAY  
Odamino

Program Room at the  
John M. Harper Branch







*As a big fan and a volunteer at the WPL, I would like to thank you and your team for all of your efforts throughout these unprecedented times! The curbside service is excellent! Your event organizers are amazing. The Evening with Souvankham Thammavongsa was absolutely wonderful and inspirational! I am so very grateful that WPL continues to work with other community partners to keep us learning and entertained by Zoom. Many thanks to you and to your teams!*

- Elli R.



## McCormick Makeover

Renovations at the McCormick Branch included a new service desk and other upgrades, creating more welcoming spaces and helping WPL staff serve you better.

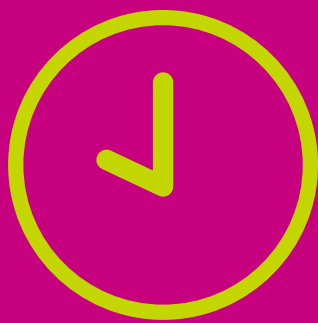


## Happy 10th Anniversary, John M. Harper Branch!

We celebrated 10 years of the John M. Harper Branch with an art installation featuring thoughts & insight from our customers, on what the branch means to them.

# Spotlight: Teen Events Team

Our Teen Events Team planned and coordinated programs for other teens as well as special activities for the community to encourage building connections.



The Teen Events Team contributed

# 225 hours

to help with programs & events



Ran games and ice breakers for Let's Talk with KW Multicultural Society



Facilitated teen art programs such as Paint Nights, String Art and writing workshops



Hosted baking programs for teens and families



Harry Potter and Disney Trivia Night



Teen Short Story and Poetry Contest



Hosted a Teen Book Club

## Teen Events Team Holiday Card Drive

The community sent in over 5,000 holiday cards that were distributed to long term care homes, refugee and homeless shelters, hospice centres and more.



Holiday cards from the Holiday Card Drive

# Library as a Catalyst

Where the Wild Things Are  
Outdoor Program



# By the Numbers



**1,096**

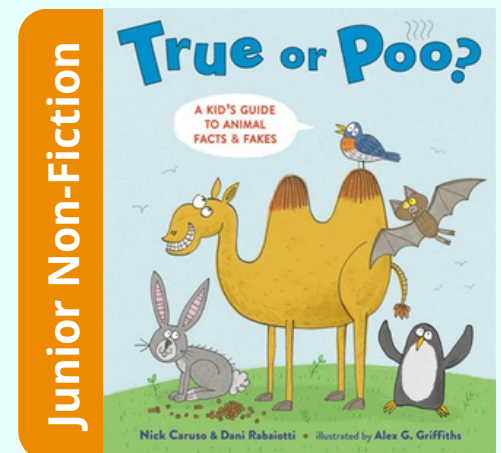
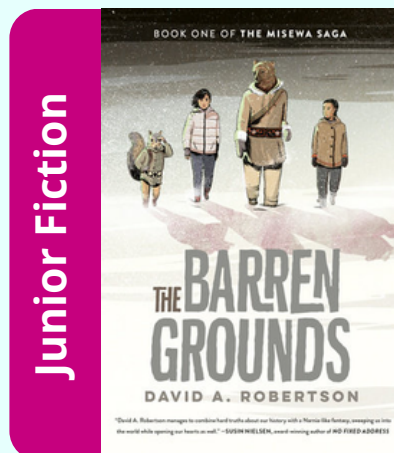
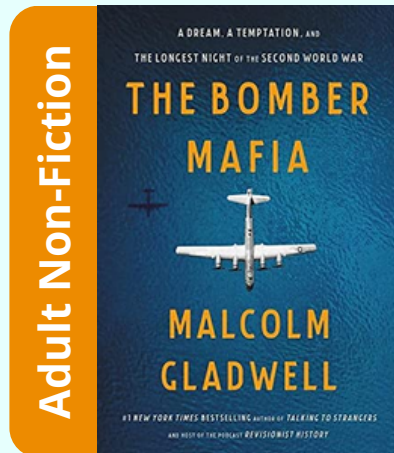
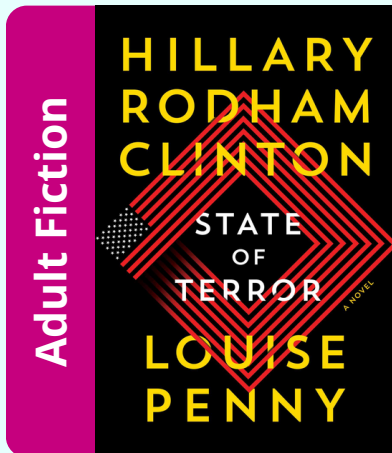
virtual & in-person programs

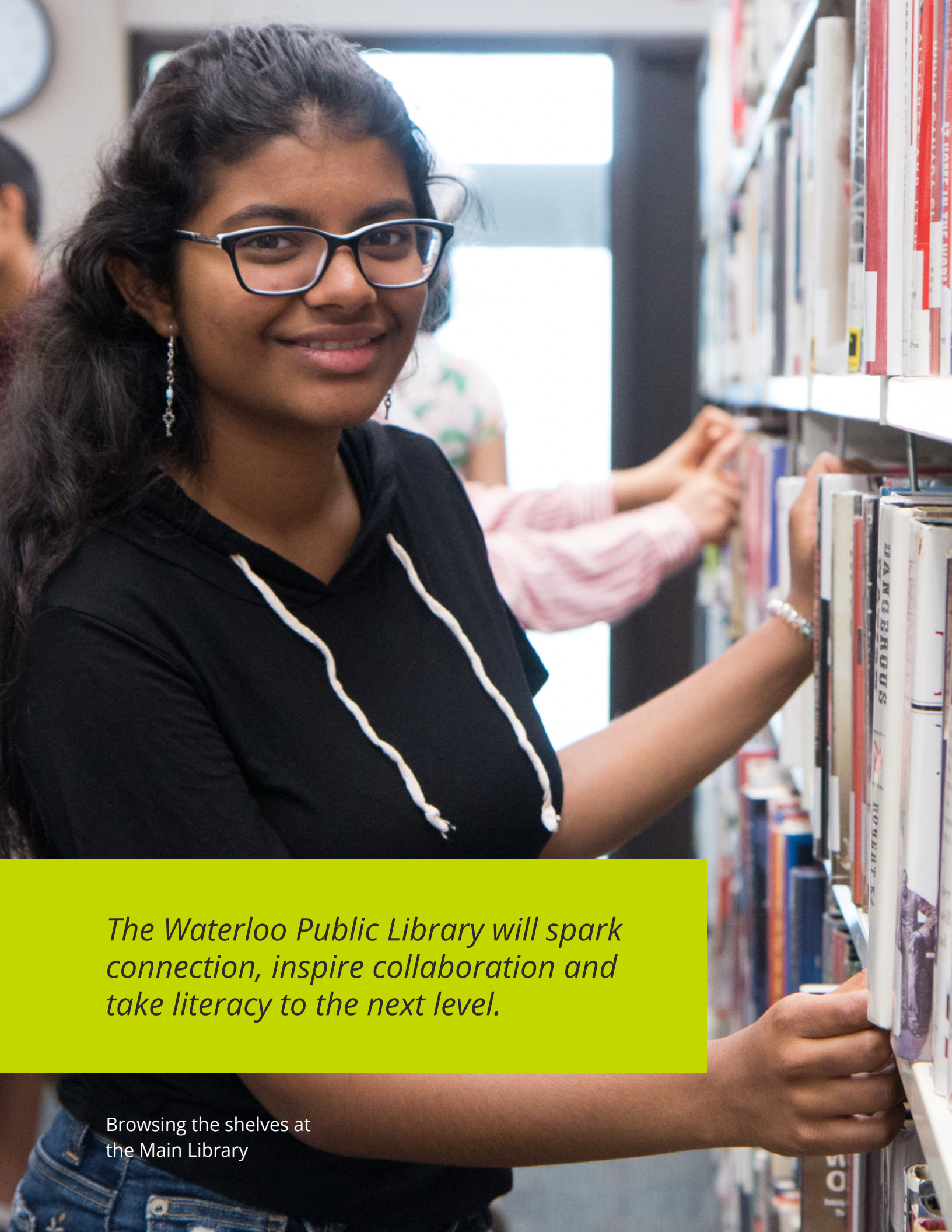


**35,302**

people attended programs

# Your Favourites





*The Waterloo Public Library will spark connection, inspire collaboration and take literacy to the next level.*

Browsing the shelves at  
the Main Library



*Can I also just take a moment to compliment you on all the fantastic programming WPL runs? Both my kids were lucky enough to get into these April camps, but they have also taken advantage of your online book clubs, coding classes, French cooking & baking classes, online virtual escape rooms and more. We are very lucky to have this amazing resource in our community!*

-Simone



## Take it Home

We introduced high value take-home kits for online programs, where customers could borrow items like instruments, telescopes and robots.

Having these items at home allowed people to practice between program sessions, creating deeper learning and a richer experience.



## Get Outside

We focused on increasing outdoor program opportunities to provide in-person experiences for community building while maintaining safety protocol. These programs included:

- Preschool Forest Kindergarten
- Amazing Race-style programs
- Trailwalking & Birdwatching
- Geocaching

# Spotlight: Partnerships

Collaborating with community organizations is an essential part of the work we do at WPL, providing greater opportunities for learning, discovery and celebration.

## Laurier EdTalks Wilfrid Laurier University

This lecture series brought local experts and educators together to discuss the future of education.

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## Islamic Heritage Month Coalition of Muslim Women KW

Featuring an author event with Uzma Jalaluddin and a Lunch & Learn about Islamic culture.

## Author Events Words Worth Books

Virtual events with Canadian authors including:

- Terry Fallis
  - Giller Prize winner, Souvankham Thammavongsa
  - Anthony Michael Downing
- 

## Let's Talk Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre

A program for newcomer youth, that provides opportunities to meet others and explore their new community.





Diwali Event at the  
John M. Harper Branch

## **Cultural Events**

**Celebrate Diwali**  
with the Tamil Cultural Association  
of Waterloo

**Lunar New Year**  
with the Waterloo Region Chinese  
Canadian Association

# "Of course, the library!"

Lounge Area at the  
John M. Harper Branch



# By the Numbers



**680**

reference questions  
answered weekly



**26,778**

visits to Check It Out  
(WPL's Blog)

# Social Media



**3,838**

Facebook followers



**4,016**

Instagram followers



**8,218**

Twitter followers



**11,648**

YouTube views

*The Waterloo Public Library will foster delight, creating a community narrative that declares, "of course, the library!"*



Study space at the  
Main Library



*I just want to thank you for being creative with your services under these trying circumstances. I have used curbside pickup and tried a couple of book bundles and I am so happy to continue enjoying the pleasures of reading at this time. Many thanks for your leadership and dedication.*

-Ruth



## Cool Things to Borrow

Our collection includes:

- Park & Museum passes
- Pedometers
- Hotspots
- Board Games & Puzzles



**650**

Hotspots borrowed



**3,656**

games & puzzles borrowed



## Book Bundles

In response to the pandemic, we began offering personalized book bundles for both adults & children in 2020. They have continued to be a very popular service.

**5,066**

book bundles created in 2021  
which included

**81,630 items**

# Spotlight: Community Outreach

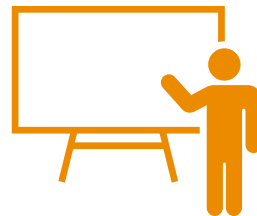
Through the pandemic, WPL continued to provide community outreach in significant ways. We connected with some of our most vulnerable populations, helping people navigate challenges and discover valuable resources.



## Over the Phone

Local History staff worked with the City of Waterloo's WOW, a Seniors' Centre Without Walls telephone program, as well as the Staying Healthy & Well program to deliver two unique sessions:

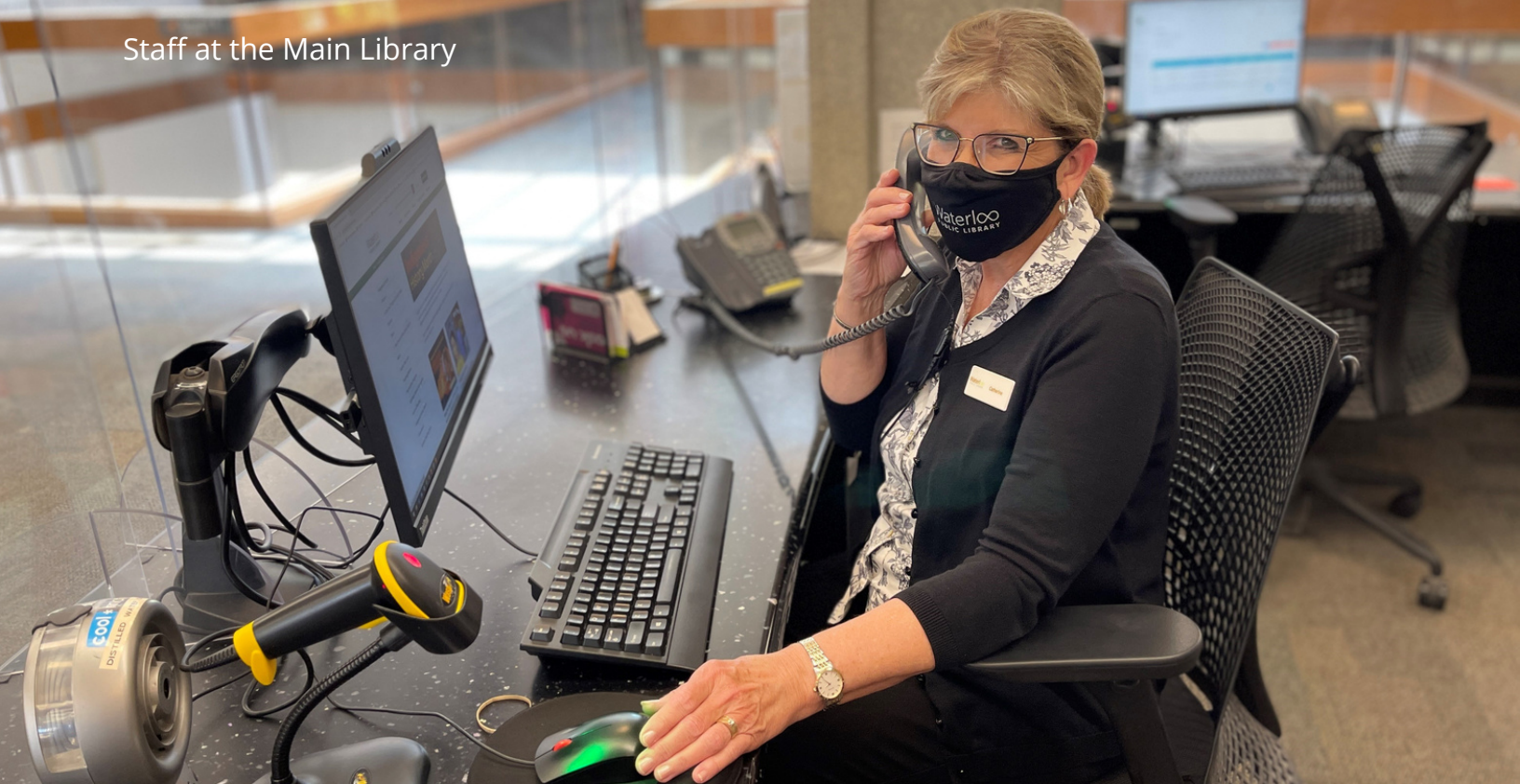
- **The History of Waterloo Park**
- **Prohibition in Waterloo**



## Helpful Tools

Our staff gave presentations to the small business community, to demonstrate a new WPL product - **SimplyAnalytics**, a mapping, analytics and data visualization app to enhance planning and projects.

Participants included the Uptown BIA, Communitech, Accelerator Centre, Small Business Centre and the City of Waterloo.



## Vaccine Task Force

In partnership with Region of Waterloo Public Health

**28**  
WPL Staff called

➤➤➤➤➤

**1,650**  
seniors

In spring of 2021, WPL collaborated with Region of Waterloo Public Health to call seniors who required assistance with booking their COVID-19 vaccines. Region of Waterloo Public Health entrusted the library to reach seniors by telephone, beginning with the oldest members of our community. The response from the seniors was phenomenal, with many tears and much gratitude. It was an enormous privilege for staff to be a part of our community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Using our skills to make a difference in the lives of so many was a gratifying experience.

# Connect With Us

519-886-1310 x124

askus@wpl.ca

wpl.ca



## Locations

### Main Library

35 Albert Street, Waterloo  
519-886-1310 Ext. 129

### John M. Harper Branch

500 Fischer Hallman Road N, Waterloo  
519-886-1310 Ext. 310

### McCormick Branch

500 Parkside Drive, Waterloo  
519-886-1310 Ext. 213

### Eastside Branch

2001 University Ave E, Waterloo  
519-886-1310 Ext. 410

Waterloo  
PUBLIC LIBRARY



McCormick Branch